Introduction to the Symposium on Modernity and Buddhism

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THE FEATURE in this issue of the *Eastern Buddhist* is devoted to the papers which were presented at the international research symposium "Modernity and Buddhism" held at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Kokusai Nihon Bunka Kenyū Sentā 国際日本文化研究センター, hereafter, Nichibunken) in Kyoto on the 13th and 14th of October, 2011. It was organized in order to sum up the collaborative research project entitled "The Pre-modern and Modern Seen from Buddhism," which was initiated in April 2008. I chaired this collaborative research. In March 2011, having completed the three-year project, the international research colloquium "Modernity and Buddhism" was organized and the period from April 2011 until March 2012 was used for publication preparations.

The objectives of this collaborative research project were formulated as follows:

> Originally, the ancient and medieval periods were the primary focus of Buddhist studies. Thus the unspoken assumption was that New Kamakura Buddhism was seen as the high point, and that earlier developments were preparatory stages—while post-medieval Buddhism was seen as its gradual diminution and corruption. However, currently, this kind of shared assumption is fading.
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> This collaborative research, recognizing the current condition of Buddhist studies, will bring together experts in both pre-modern and modern Buddhist studies. It will compare and contrast the Buddhism of these two periods and attempt to uncover the meaning of the transformation from pre-modern to modern. Further,

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since this project will draw together experts in religious studies who approach Japanese religion from a broad perspective, it will establish a point of view that considers the broader conceptual and religious history of Japan rather than simply Buddhism.

More specifically, we plan to cast our focus on the late pre-modern era (the Edo period: 1603–1868). In the late pre-modern era, the ideas and religion of the ancient and medieval periods were transformed into modern ones, and this transformation indeed engendered and constituted a new world. Previously, late pre-modern ideas were said to have been primarily Confucian in character, but currently this interpretation has been completely overturned; instead, contemporary scholarship emphasizes the basic influence of Buddhism on the ethics and religion of the populace.

In this collaborative research, we will combine debates concerning members' presentations with group readings of relevant primary texts, attempting thereby to clarify the relationship between religion, ideas, and the development of late pre-modern Buddhism. Ultimately, we will attempt to develop an appropriate interpretive framework for the study of late pre-modern Buddhism. By such means, we will venture to gain a clearer outlook concerning the problem of how late pre-modern Buddhism mediated the transformation of ancient and medieval Buddhism into modern Buddhism. Furthermore, in this way, we can presumably come to comprehensive conclusions concerning not only Buddhism but also epochal changes in the entirety of Japanese religion and thought.

In order to realize these objectives, we first focused our research on the late pre-modern period, particularly the Edo period. However, due to the fact that many of our collaborative researchers are modern specialists and also considering that recently, research on modern Buddhism has been proceeding at a very brisk pace, we decided to separate our research into two groups: one that focused on the late pre-modern period and another that focused on the modern. These two groups carried out their research concurrently. The late pre-modern group focused on reading, deciphering, and discussing *Myō Tei mondō* 妙貞問答 (Questions and Answers [by the two nuns] Myōshu and Yūtei), a Christian text criticizing Buddhism in the early seventeenth century. At present, we are working toward the publication of a revised edition of this text, which will include a modern Japanese translation of the text as well. An English translation is also in the works. The modern group exam-

ined from different angles how Buddhism changed and developed during Japan's modernization.

In holding the international research symposium "Modernity and Buddhism," we took up the modern group's work with the aim of examining modern Buddhism from an international perspective. In the first section, we considered problems surrounding the formation of modern Buddhism, including perspectives from Europe, America, and Asia. In the second section, we focused on Japan. In the third, we examined modern Buddhism in Asia. And in the fourth section, we held a comprehensive discussion. The symposium's objectives, which were appended to the letter of invitation, are as follows:

> In recent years, it is gradually becoming common knowledge that the "Buddhism" that we understand today is something that in fact has changed a great deal since the advent of modernity. Thus, revisiting the question of our understanding of Buddhism in the modern period becomes a major task because, especially since the later 1990s, research on modern Buddhism has developed rapidly in Asia, including Japan, as well as in Europe and the United States.
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> Asian researchers are revisiting the question of the relationship of modernization and Buddhism in their own countries. They have a particular interest in the mutual relationships of modern Buddhism during the period of colonization with many instances of concern about the public function of modern Buddhism. Meanwhile research is now conspicuous in Europe and America which has self-reflectively investigated Western history. Under the influence of the critiques of orientalism and the ideas put forth about post-colonialism, this research has traced the origins of religious studies and Buddhist studies, questioning why the interest of Westerners in Buddhism, a product of foreign cultures, arose. At this international research conference, by inviting specialists from around the world who are engaged in work at the forefront of their respective fields, Japanese researchers will engage in debate and discussion with Asian and Euro-American scholars for the purpose of deepening mutual criticism and understanding.
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> The conference will take place as the summing up of a cooperative research project entitled "The Pre-modern and Modern Seen from Buddhism" which was conducted at the Nichibunken under the chairmanship of Sueki Fumihiko. This collaborative research

> was successful in its aim to elucidate the conversion of Japan from the pre-modern to the modern as viewed from the aspect of its thought and religious life which centered on Buddhism. Furthermore, this international research conference has been planned to extend its field of view to Asia generally and to Europe and America, in accordance with the project's intent to synthetically explicate the problem of modernity and Buddhism. We look forward to deepening the debates on this problem through the cooperation of our associated scholars.

The basic plan of the international research symposium was put together by Hayashi Makoto (Professor at Aichi Gakuin University, Guest Professor at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies) and Isomae Jun'ichi (Associate Professor at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies). The members of the executive committee of the symposium were Hayashi Makoto, Yoshinaga Shin'ichi (Associate Professor, Maizuru National College of Technology), Ōtani Eiichi (Associate Professor, Bukkyō University) and myself. The papers presented there were written either in English or Japanese and translated into the other language, so that the participants could read all the papers in both languages. Here we have collected the English versions of the papers which were revised after the symposium. The collection of the Japanese versions, *Kindai to bukkyō* 近代と仏教, was published by Nichibunken in May 2012.

The following is a revised version of the explanation of objectives presented at the symposium.

Buddhist Studies in Modern Japan[1]

Nowadays, the principal research field that deals with Buddhism is Buddhist studies (*bukkyōgaku* 仏教学), but there are some doubts as to what extent it is publicly recognized as a field of research. Private universities of Buddhist lineage have Buddhist studies programs, but other universities generally do not have such a department or major, with a few exceptions like the Department of Indian Philosophy and Buddhist Studies at Tokyo University and the Department of Buddhist Studies at Kyoto University. While in general all top national universities have specialists in Buddhism on their faculties, they usually belong to the departments of Indian philosophy.

[1] This section is based on my "Bukkyō kenkyū hōhōron to kenkyūshi" 仏教研究方法論と研究史 (Sueki 2011).

As one can see, a particularity of Buddhist studies in Japan is that it is closely tied to Indology and Indian philosophy. For Buddhist studies, as far as academic societies on a national scale are concerned, we have the Japanese Association for Buddhist Studies (Nihon Bukkyō Gakkai 日本仏教学会), but the Japanese Association for Indian and Buddhist Studies (Nihon Indogaku Bukkyō Gakkai 日本印度学仏教学会) operates on a much larger scale. Also, the Department of Indian Philosophy and Buddhist Studies at Tokyo University was originally called the Department of Indian Philosophy, and only in 1994 did it change its name to Indian Philosophy and Buddhist Studies.

Certainly Buddhism emerged from India, so in a way it makes perfect sense that Buddhist studies is linked to Indology. There is no question regarding research on Indian Buddhism being included within the domain of Indian philosophy. However, because Buddhist studies as a whole has been integrated with and subsumed under research on Indian philosophy and the Indian classics, the mainstream of Buddhist studies has been placed upon *Indian* Buddhist studies. As such, it has become difficult to position the Buddhist studies of other nations and continents, thus enfeebling the research in these fields. For instance, does it not seem strange that in Tokyo University the lectures for Chinese Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism were held under the heading "Indian Philosophy"?

This situation is caused by the fact that modern Buddhist studies in Japan was established under the strong influence of Indian philology in Europe and America. The standard of research on the literature of Indian Buddhism in Japan is incredibly high. As early as the end of the nineteenth century (specifically in 1883), Nanjō Bun'yū 南条文雄 (1849–1927), the first Japanese who studied in the United Kingdom, published the Sanskrit versions of the larger and smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha* sutras in collaboration with his teacher Max Müller (1823–1900).[2] The Japanese, being skilled at reading texts in Chinese characters, had the advantage of being able to understand Sanskrit texts by contrasting them with the Chinese texts and were hence able to advance to the forefront of the world of Buddhist studies with solid research results. Because of this, study of Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures was lionized as the star of Buddhist studies in Japan, and East Asian Buddhist studies was relegated to the shadows.

Buddhist studies in Japan may seem to have developed as purely objective research, but in actuality, most of the researchers who carried it out

[2] Müller and Nanjio 1883.

were priests, monks, or laymen affiliated with temples, and hence this field had the character of being an academic discipline for members of the Buddhist clergy. Seen from the point of view of the Buddhist world, Buddhist studies served the role of clarifying the development of Buddhism in India and thereby molding the doctrinal foundations of the various schools of Japanese Buddhism. On this point, the situation may seem similar to theology in Christianity. But in theology, faith is taken as a presupposition and the subjective problem of how to deepen and articulate this faith is dealt with upfront. Buddhist studies on the other hand tried to maintain a semblance of objective study.

Rather than Buddhist studies, it is sectarian studies (*shūgaku* 宗学) that are similar to theology. This is the field within each sect or school whose research is primarily centered around the teachings of the founder of that school. There is not one single academic discipline called "sectarian studies," but rather each sect has its own—Tendai 天台 studies, Mikkyō 密教 (Esoteric Buddhism) studies, Zen 禅 studies, Pure Land studies, Shinshū 真宗 (True Pure Land) studies, etc. These fields exist side by side with no real relation to each other. In various sectarian universities, these fields of sectarian studies are usually the central academic field and part of the core curriculum for the training of priests and monks. These sectarian universities are the re-structured and modified forms of institutions originally referred to as Buddhist centers for study and meditation (*danrin* 檀林) or learning centers (*gakurin* 学林). In the late pre-modern period, these functioned as institutions for the training of priests and monks. In the late pre-modern learning centers, the main foci of study were sectarian dogmas and doctrines (*shūjō* 宗乗), but together with these, more general and foundational Buddhist teachings known as auxiliary teachings (*yojō* 余乗) were usually studied as well. Influenced by this, the present system of sectarian universities commonly includes both a department for sectarian studies (Department of Zen Studies, or Department of True Pure Land Studies, etc.) along with a department of Buddhist studies.

In this way, research on Buddhism in Japan is a two-layered structure, comprised of both Buddhist studies and sectarian studies. Both the Japanese Association for Buddhist Studies and the Japanese Association for Indian and Buddhist Studies, and hence Buddhist studies in a broad sense, include both the narrow sense of Buddhist studies and sectarian studies as well. In order for sectarian studies to establish and propagate the official teachings of each sect, research proceeds under the presupposition that the founder's teachings are as a matter of fact correct, making it essentially different from

objective fields of study. Since Buddhist studies is seen as supplementing sectarian studies, substantially, the doctrines of the various sects of Japanese Buddhism become presuppositions within Buddhist studies in the broad sense of the word. This tendency is particularly strong within sectarian universities. As such, it is presupposed that there are no contradictions which would disrupt the harmonization of the teachings of Indian Buddhism as brought to light in Buddhist studies and the thought of the various founders of Japanese Buddhism. Also, their thought is seen to be a part of the development of Indian Buddhism.

Because the various sects of Japanese Buddhism are part of Mahayana Buddhism, studies of Mahayana Buddhism are much more prevalent than studies of early Buddhism. On this point, Japanese Buddhist studies differs from those in Europe or America, which tend to idealize early Buddhism. The prevalence of Mahayana traditions in Japan was why the theory that the Mahayana was not preached by the Buddha (*daijō hibussetsu ron* 大乗非仏説論) became a major issue here. Ultimately, Mahayana scriptures are generally understood in the Japanese Buddhist studies community as expounding the true intent of the teachings of the Buddha that was not apparent in early Buddhist scriptures. Further, the founders of Japanese Buddhism are seen as having clarified the "true intention" of Mahayana scriptures.

The Multilayered Nature of Modern Japanese Buddhism[3]

As we have seen, the various sects of Japanese Buddhism built the foundations of education and learning through the set combination of Buddhist studies and sectarian studies. As such, Buddhist studies sought after the way Buddhism *ought* to be, as an ideal, on the basis of the study of Buddhist literature. It was not necessarily an understanding of the actual state of affairs of Buddhism. This was particularly the case in various sects, wherein while taking the founder's perspective as absolute, efforts were made to interpret the thought of the founder in a modern and rational way as well. Kiyozawa Manshi 清沢満之 (1863–1903) of the True Pure Land Ōtani 大谷 branch is an archetype of this.

Kiyozawa graduated from the Department of Philosophy of Tokyo Imperial University, having exerted his efforts in the philosophical interpretation of Pure Land teachings. He understood these teachings as the relationship between the absolute, infinite Amida Buddha and relative, finite human beings. As such, unlike the view of the Pure Land teachings that lasted until

[3] This section is based on *Nihon bukkyō no kanōsei* 日本仏教の可能性 (Sueki 2006).

the late pre-modern period which focused on rebirth in paradise in the next life, Kiyozawa advocated a completely revamped modern religious view that focused on how we ought to relate to the absolute, infinite other in *this life*. This understanding of Pure Land teachings was modeled after Christianity—the influence of Christianity on the Japanese modern Buddhist paradigm is considerable.

Kiyozawa expounded on the fundamental framework of the interpretation of Pure Land teachings, but it was his disciples who concretely developed this framework in accordance with scriptures. In particular, Akegarasu Haya 暁烏敏 (1877–1954), Soga Ryōjin 曽我量深 (1875–1971), Kaneko Daiei 金子大栄 (1881–1976), and others greatly furthered the interpretation of Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262). They emphasized the *Tannishō* 歎異抄, which became required reading for the Japanese, and thus exerted an influence that went beyond sectarian bounds.

In this way, both in Buddhist studies and in sectarian studies, the modern interpretation of Buddhism received much impetus. But this impetus came not merely from the world of discourse but was also tied to the state's policies on religion. The modernization of Japanese Buddhism is considered to have originated from religion gaining independence from the government, that is, from the separation of church and state and the establishment of religious freedom. The Meiji Restoration (1868) was realized through the strong support of Shintoism. While Shintoism had seized a great amount of power within government, in order to suppress the influence of Buddhism, these forces attempted the separation of Shintoism and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離). Previously, the faith of the Japanese people was commonly a synthesis of Buddhism and Shintoism (*shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合), but because of the separation of Shintoism and Buddhism, for the first time these two religions gained independence from each other.

At first, the Meiji government adopted Shintoism as the state religion. But it soon realized that trying to ignore Buddhism, which held tremendous influence, was futile, and thus established the Ministry of Religious Education and through the Daikyōin 大教院 (Major Institute for Religious Matters) revised their stance toward unifying Shintoism and Buddhism. But Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911), a leading figure of the True Pure Land sect, took the vanguard and rallied opposition against this, so that eventually the government had to repeal this policy. At that time, Shimaji was in the midst of surveying the situation of religion in Europe, and was deeply influenced by the new Christian movements and the policies concerning the separation of church and state. As such, he firmly insisted that religion was a concern

of the hearts and minds of human beings, and the government, which is concerned with human externalities, has no right to intrude into this free domain. Admitting his assertion to be valid, the church and the state were separated and religious freedom was established in Japan.

While separation of church and state and religious freedom were great victories for modern Buddhism, this was not without its problems. The view of religion that Shimaji erected was, due to Christian influence, largely restricted to the inner problems of the human being. This view did not necessarily reflect the actual beliefs of Japanese people.

First, having already accepted the separation of Shintoism and Buddhism enacted by the Meiji government and having rejected Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, Shimaji emphasized a pure Buddhist faith. He distinguished Buddhism and Shintoism as two separate religions and considered believing in both, simultaneously, to be an impurity of sorts. However, because Shintoism was an ideology supporting the emperor system, rejecting it was considered to be unpatriotic and anti-state. So Shimaji emphasized that Shintoism was not a religion but a veneration of the ancestors of the emperor who were the founders of the nation of Japan, and hence placed it within the domain of politics. Eventually, the state adopted this view and State Shinto was no longer considered to be a religion. As such, the enforcement of State Shinto was not seen as an infringement upon the separation of church and state or upon religious freedom.

Negating the syncretism of Shintoism and Buddhism but seeing Buddhism (a religion) and Shintoism (not a religion) as non-contradictory and accepting both in a multilayered fashion—this is a system I refer to as the complementarity of Shintoism and Buddhism (*shinbutsu hokan* 神仏補完). This is certainly particular to modern Japan. This system continued even after State Shinto was abolished in post-war Japan, and many Japanese consider it perfectly natural to go to both Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples without ever thinking that they are simultaneously holding two religious creeds.

Second, because of the parish system (*jidan seido* 寺檀制度) in the late pre-modern period, citizens were required to be registered in a particular Buddhist temple. This was basically by household, so it was not that people chose Buddhism as their individual faith, but instead based on this system, they were born as parishioners of a given Buddhist temple. This parish system was abolished by the Meiji government, and in theory Buddhism became merely one possible choice of religion, but the actual circumstances were hardly so.

The social system that the Meiji government adopted was a patriarchal structure with the emperor at the very apex. The principles of this system were promulgated in the Meiji Constitution of 1889, and its ethics were articulated in the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890. The succeeding system that established the patriarchal structure was contained within the Civil Law of 1898. Furthermore, with the Imperial Household Law of 1889, which declared that succession would be through the emperor's eldest son, the social system of modern Japan was established. According to the Imperial Rescript on Education, the ethics of filial piety toward one's parents is directly connected to loyalty to the emperor, and thus the institution of the family became the foundation that supports the emperor system.

In the home, the father who was the head of the household bore absolute authority, and that authority, together with the family assets, was to be inherited by the eldest son. The head of the household protected the home, and was obligated to ensure succession in the next generation. The gravestones and memorial tablets of the ancestors symbolized the family and the home. The head of the household had to guard these and worship his ancestors with reverence. However, memorial tablets were usually enshrined in the *butsudan* 仏壇, the home Buddhist altar, and tombs were commonly located within the grounds of a Buddhist temple. The modern gravesites were usually called "family tombs," and they were no longer for individuals alone but for an entire household. As such, not only funerals, but also rites for ancestor worship were conducted in Buddhist fashion, and Buddhist priests led these events. This is what is called "funeral Buddhism" in the modern period.

In late pre-modern Buddhism, under the parish system, the everyday lives of the Japanese were closely knit with Buddhist temples, not merely for funerals but in other aspects as well. But when modernity came about, the main function of Buddhist temples was reduced to funerals, the administration of gravesites, and memorial services for ancestors. Furthermore, these were no longer government policies but were completely without legislative regulation. It was simply that Shintoism, as State Shinto, was forbidden from carrying out religious activities and hence could not perform funerals. Christianity was not inclined to offer memorial services for ancestors either. Hence the only group that could bear the responsibility for funerals and ancestor worship was Buddhism, which had the know-how ever since the late pre-modern period.

In this way, when Buddhism should have become an entirely free and elective religion for citizens, it instead played a key role in supporting the foundation of the emperor-centered patriarchy of the modern period. While

Buddhism seemed to have lost government support and weakened in the modern period, it actually retained considerable power by substantially supporting the modern social system, a move that significantly filled temple coffers.

After the Second World War, the social system underwent a dramatic upheaval. The patriarchal system was abolished, the powers of patriarchs greatly diminished, and inheritance came to be equally distributed amongst kin. But the system of funeral Buddhism persisted until around the 1980s. After that, the conditions of funerals changed abruptly, and at present funeral Buddhism is in a state of considerable distress. One could come up with quite a few reasons for this, but I think one major cause is that the consciousness of home and family has weakened and it is no longer seen as necessary to maintain the gravesite or memorial tablets of one's ancestors in a Buddhist manner.

When one thinks of the above-mentioned role that modern Buddhism in Japan played, one can see that the Buddhist studies and intellectual Buddhist thought I discussed as an external discourse are built upon a base comprised of funeral Buddhism. This external idealized discourse is only possible on the basis of the existence of the economic foundation laid by funeral Buddhism that lies in the inner depths. We can think of Japanese modern Buddhism as a multilayered structure of this sort.

The advocates who constructed the outer layer of rationalized Buddhism often conceal the funeral Buddhism that lies in its depths, and banish it from their discourse. In their apologetics, they claim that funeral Buddhism has nothing to do with original Buddhism and is merely a depraved form of Buddhism, and furthermore that it was merely a skillful means of spreading Buddhism amidst stupid Japanese masses who were incapable of comprehending the heights of Buddhism, as if it could not be helped. However, in truth it was the economic base of funeral Buddhism itself that made their activities possible, and decrying funeral Buddhism as a mere expedient means is rather unreasonable to begin with.

There is an academic field that does research on the activities of funeral Buddhism—a field called folklore studies (*minzokugaku* 民俗学). Folklore studies in Japan was originally established by Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男 (1875–1962) as a discipline that does research on customs and folkways found in various areas and aims to elucidate the way of life of the people. Through this research, Yanagita sought to clarify the way of life and culture of the Japanese people prior to Buddhism. As such, he tried to consider folk customs in a way that excluded Buddhist influence as much as possible.

However, his disciples fleshed out the research on Buddhist folk customs, including funerals. Unfortunately, the Buddhist studies scholars who were doing research on the outer layer of idealized Buddhism belittled folklore studies, the very discipline that was doing research on the actual conditions of Buddhism, regarding such studies as something useless for the explanation of "True Buddhism." The folklore scholars too considered the Buddhism expounded from literature by Buddhist studies scholars as empty and disconnected from reality, and thinking the work in Buddhist studies had no connection at all with the actual state of things, did not conduct any cooperative work with them. Furthermore, in the study of history, studies of Buddhist history have made much progress, but the academic field in Japan was largely a narrow and closed one where researchers generally worked in seclusion, making mutual cooperation difficult to come by. Because of these factors, it was impossible to sketch the overall picture of Japanese Buddhism in an integrated manner. The interdisciplinary cooperation that brought about the resurgence in Buddhist research is no more than twenty years old.

Incidentally, the discourse of modernized Buddhism I mentioned is not confined merely within sects, but is a discourse that, to a certain extent, influenced the intellectuals of Japan. Faced with the demand to respond to the sudden onslaught of modernization, and simultaneously the imposition of the Imperial Rescript on Education under the emperor system, modern Japanese intellectuals were plunged into profound anguish. In such circumstances, Buddhism transcended such a reality and functioned as something that gave a sense of relief, of salvation. There were many intellectuals who turned to Zen or Pure Land teachings for salvation. As mentioned, the *Tannishō* was a particularly beloved text, and the third section, which contains a teaching that holds that the salvation offered by Amida Buddha is particularly directed toward evil people, was deeply admired for it gave respite to intellectuals who, despairing of the morals of worldly society, were probably awash with a sense of guilt. The view of salvation held by intellectuals in modern Japan, wherein no matter how much evil one has done, one will still be saved by the compassion of Buddha (like a loving mother), can perhaps be seen as a form of the *amae* 甘え (fawning or dependence on the kindness of another) characteristic of the Japanese. During the war, this compassion of the Buddha was eventually subsumed into the function of the emperor, and the emperor was symbolized as combining both the authority and power of a father (to the nation) and the compassion of a mother. Perhaps one can say that Buddhism became the basis of such a faith in the emperor.

On Modern Buddhism

(1) What is Modern Buddhism?

In the preceding sections, I inquired into modern Buddhism and the development of Buddhist studies, as well as the social functions these played within Japan. The points I raised are merely my personal views, which have not necessarily gained acceptance in wider academic circles. In this section, keeping in mind the considerations I have discussed on modern Buddhism in Japan, I would like to share some comments on the issues of modern Buddhism in general.

There are many definitions surrounding the question "What is modern Buddhism?" David L. McMahan has written a sizable work on modern Buddhism,[4] where he deals with the following distinct, yet related concepts: modern, modernization, modernity, modernism, and so on. It is necessary to consider carefully the distinctions between the meanings of these terms. Here in this section, however, I will not discriminate among them.

In answer to this question, we can point out the following characterization which Donald L. Lopez concisely expressed in his introduction to *Modern Buddhism*:

> Modern Buddhism rejects many of the ritual and magical elements of previous forms of Buddhism, it stresses equality over hierarchy, the universal over the local, and often exalts the individual above the community. Yet, . . . modern Buddhism does not see itself as the culmination of a long process of evolution, but rather as a return to the origin, to the Buddhism of the Buddha himself.[5]

In this book, Lopez took up thirty-one modern Buddhists—among them Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891), Sir Edwin Arnold (1832–1904), Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907)—and composed an anthology from their writings. He also took up the following Japanese thinkers: Shaku Sōen 釈宗演 (1860–1919), Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙 (1870–1966), and Suzuki Shunryū 鈴木俊隆 (1905–1971). As far as modern Buddhism is concerned, this is a most excellent compilation that is likely to become a classic.

[4] McMahan 2008.

[5] Lopez 2002, p. xi.

(2) Universality and Uniqueness

Lopez's definition is a very clear one and is fundamentally acceptable. However, there are several parts which one might find questionable. First, can modern Buddhism really be understood as universal or worldwide, a global phenomenon? The previous definition roughly corresponds to the external discourse of Japanese modern Buddhism. But there are questions as to whether there really is an intention to return to primitive Buddhism. For sure Kiyozawa Manshi emphasized the *Āgama*s, and his disciple Akanuma Chizen 赤沼智善 (1884–1937) carried out some noteworthy research in primitive Buddhism. It is a fact that during the modern period the interest toward primitive Buddhism became stronger, but as I previously mentioned, in Japan the return to the Japanese founders and patriarchs is much more central. Even in the case of scriptures, it is the Mahayana scriptures that are central. This is not only the case for Pure Land teachings but for Zen as well.

Also, when one considers the particular people who represent modern Buddhism, taking Suzuki Shunryū for instance, while he is certainly important from the point of view of modern Buddhism in America, almost no one even knows his name in Japan. From the point of view of Japan, while Kiyozawa and Soga Ryōjin of the True Pure Land school, or Tanaka Chigaku 田中智学 (1861–1939) of the Nichiren 日蓮 school are considered to have exerted tremendous influence on Japan, they probably had very little influence outside Japan.

As such, perhaps there is room to reconsider whether it is correct to look at modern Buddhism from a merely global perspective. There is a considerable disparity between the aspects of modern Buddhism examined with the "West" (Europe and America) at the center and modern Buddhism examined with the various countries of Asia at the center. Actually, this is not merely a problem within the inquiry into Buddhism, but to begin with, "modernity" itself is considerably different in the West and in Asia. For the West, the modern period was something that originated spontaneously from within that geographic region. But for non-Western countries, the reality of modernity was imposed amidst a milieu of Western colonization as something that non-Westerners simply could not but adapt to and deal with. In that situation, the movement to accept Western modernization and promote modernization became entangled with the opposing movement against modernity. Whichever side one examines, both exhibited strong nationalism.

If that is so, then naturally the modern Buddhism established in the West and the modern Buddhism that developed in various regions in Asia are bound to possess markedly different characteristics. In that case, as I mentioned with regard to Japan, it is necessary to examine not just the

externals—the thought of intellectuals—but the differences in the social structure of the area and *Geist* of the people. One cannot discuss modern Buddhism while ignoring the important connections Buddhism has with Christianity in America, with Shintoism in Japan, with Confucianism and Marxism in China. Furthermore, as I have mentioned, one needs to consider deep structures as well, such as funeral Buddhism in Japan. As a matter of course, the problems are different in the case of the West where a brand new Buddhism was grafted in a place with no Buddhist tradition, and in the case of the various regions of Asia where Buddhist tradition had already existed and traditional Buddhism had to be modernized.

Nevertheless, having recognized the distinctiveness of each area, it is necessary to face the reality that mutual relations have become tighter, and human exchange and reciprocal influence are more prominent than they have ever been before, both between the West and Asia, and even within Asia itself. People of the Theosophical Society found resonance with Buddhism and, in bringing it to Europe, transformed it. This transformed Buddhism was re-imported into Asia and stimulated a reformation of traditional Buddhism. Hence, the development of Buddhism was much like a game of catch ball. If we keep this point in mind, perhaps it is possible to sketch out the contours of modern Buddhism as the dynamic interchange within the shared space of cultural difference.

(3) Practice and Research

There is one more issue I would like to raise. When one does research on modern Buddhism, is it not so that "research" cannot stop at objective research, but unquestionably becomes linked to practical problems? Perhaps in ancient and medieval issues, remaining within mere objective research is possible. But the various issues of the modern period are directly related to us, living in the present; one has to have some sort of a decisive attitude toward these issues. For example, Lopez's definition of modern Buddhism includes words which are connected to modern values such as equality and universality. Also, it is unthinkable that in this day and age wherein the deadlock of modern society is plain to see, we continue to approve of and encourage modern enterprises the way they are. It is imperative that we clarify and decide what we will inherit and what we will criticize from the modern period.

To what extent can academic research involve itself in practical issues? That is a difficult question. Perhaps we can look at the activities of "(Socially) Engaged Buddhism" and "Critical Buddhism" (*hihan bukkyō* 批判仏教) which endeavored to do precisely that.

Sallie B. King defines socially engaged Buddhism as follows:

> Engaged Buddhism is defined and unified by the intention of Buddhists of whatever sect to apply the values and teachings of Buddhism to the problems of society in a nonviolent way, motivated by concern for the welfare of others and as an expression of their own Buddhist practices.[6]

King raises Vietnam's Thich Nhat Hanh and the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of A. T. Ariyaratne in Sri Lanka as archetypes of socially engaged Buddhism. Also, she points to the influence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948) in the background of many socially engaged Buddhists.[7]

By including the clause "non-violent" within the definition of socially engaged Buddhism, King limits its scope. However, if we take the notion of social engagement in its broad sense, then perhaps activities like Buddhists participating in war could also be seen as one kind of social engagement. Actually, Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya sees tendencies toward the state and nationalism as characteristics of Japanese socially engaged Buddhism, and recognizes Buddhist participation in Japan's war as a form of socially engaged Buddhism.[8]

King's inclusion of "non-violence" within the definition of socially engaged Buddhism is clearly a reflection of her own values. That is to say, this definition is not merely research on the various forms of actual socially engaged Buddhism, but rather an attempt to express socially engaged Buddhism *as an ideal*. We had Mukhopadhyaya and Brian Daizen Victoria speak on non-violence and the problem of peace for a public lecture on the final day of the symposium.[9]

Critical Buddhism is another movement that straddles both academic research and social practice. This movement originally arose in Japan, but it has reawakened interest in its spread to China and America.[10]

How scholarly research should relate to practice is a tremendous problem, and it will be necessary to discuss this issue in connection with the study of modern Buddhism as well.

(Translated by Anton Luis Sevilla)

[6] King 2009, p. 2.

[7] King 2009, p. 2.

[8] *Nihon no shakai sanka bukkyō* 日本の社会参加仏教 (Mukhopadhyaya 2005), pp. 51–55.

[9] Their lectures are not included in the current feature. See Jerryson and Juergensmeyer 2010 on the relationship of Buddhism and violence.

[10] See Hubbard and Swanson 1997, Shields 2011, Lin 1999, and Tang 2006.

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